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Talkin' Socialism: J. A. Wayland and the Role of the Press in American Radicalism, 1890-1912

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In a story as dramatic as *The Gibraltar*, where radicals, company gunmen, politicians, and a cast of thousands of strikers and their foes take the stage, it is unfortunate that many of the protagonists remain shadowy figures. With the exception of radical newspaper editor William Dunne, who appears as playful as he is revolutionary, Calvert offers little insight into the personal histories that shaped these men—and it is men who are on stage here. Congresswoman Jeannette Rankin makes a cameo appearance, but few women grace these pages. The other problem with this work is its equation of miners with the Butte work force. Occasionally Calvert mentions the other craft unions that existed in Butte, most often in connection with their support or lack of it for the miners' strikes. Miners were the major labor force of the city, but thousands of other men and women worked in jobs that were part of the mining economy, and their role in this story gets short shrift.

In a thoughtful afterword Calvert addresses the perennial question: why is there no viable socialist movement in the United States? Extrapolating from the case of Butte, he offers some insightful conclusions. This work deserves a far larger audience than Montana historians. Those interested in the history of American labor and socialism, in the role of government surveillance, and in the factors that come into play when an individual casts a vote will find this a valuable book.

Talkin' Socialism: J. A. Wayland and the Role of the Press in American Radicalism, 1890–1912, by Elliott Shore. Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1988. xi, 280 pp. Illustrations, appendix, notes, bibliography, index. \$25.00 cloth.

REVIEWED BY WILLIAM H. CUMBERLAND, BUENA VISTA COLLEGE

Elliott Shore has written a definitive volume on the role of the radical press during the golden age of American socialism, with a special reminder of the importance to that movement of the country editor J. A. Wayland and his *Coming Nation* and *The Appeal to Reason*. Shore focuses on Wayland's middle-class Republican background and the cauldron of forces that overwhelmed him during the formative 1890s. Wayland, a typical middle-class, native-born reformer, influenced by John Ruskin and Laurence Gronlund, moved from Republicanism through populism to socialism while expounding the democratic faith passed from Jefferson to Jackson to Lincoln. A master at reducing the complex to the simple, Wayland translated Ruskin and Gronlund into

his "one hoss" philosophy and set out to educate the masses concerning the benefits of socialism.

Yet it appears that this country editor turned socialist was as much an entrepreneur as his establishment competitors. Nor was he opposed to paying low wages and demanding hard work to ensure profits from his paper—a practice that led to a walkout of *Appeal* workers in 1903. Generally, Wayland was more than willing to accept advertising from capitalists and to use whatever business techniques were available. Unlike modern radical presses, most of which lack modern communications facilities, Wayland, using the latest printing technology and business methods, was able to develop the circulation to compete with commercial publishers as he sought to reach the masses. In short, Shore leaves the impression that Wayland was a compromiser, a business promoter, an entrepreneur who willingly made his peace with capitalism in order to ensure his survival.

By 1905 Wayland had been joined by Fred D. Warren, a Republican and a prohibitionist who had become a socialist because of corruption in the GOP and because of his work experience as a miner. Warren, perhaps more than Wayland, transformed the *Appeal* into a big business and a force to be reckoned with in American society. The paper became more oriented toward reporting, engaged in muckraking, and got involved in national politics and labor disputes.

The Appeal to Reason was very important to the prosperity of the small town of Girard, Kansas (population 2,500), where it was published, and it contributed in surprising ways to the town's radicalization. Many of the movement's most prominent names worked or wrote for the paper at one time or another: Upton Sinclair's *The Jungle* was first printed in the *Appeal*, and Eugene Debs found his work there a welcome haven from the stress of campaigning and party leadership. According to Shore, the *Appeal* hastened progressive reform partly through fear of more radical solutions. The establishment's fears led to harassment from President Theodore Roosevelt and postal authorities and obviously trumped-up charges against Wayland (and later Warren) which may have influenced Wayland's decision to commit suicide in 1912.

The *Appeal* entered a period of serious decline after Wayland's suicide and Warren's resignation in 1914 brought new management and a different style to the paper. Yet it ultimately collapsed, according to Shore, because the forces that followed it appeared too coercive, overly regimented, and conventional, and because of its hostile attitude toward blacks, Catholics, women, and the urban working class. This narrow attitude also weakened the Socialist party; as Shore points out, "the abiding fear of the big city and support for anti-

immigration laws were policies that would doom any party seeking support from the working class in America" (222).

Shore has made good use of the Wayland and Haldemann-Julius Collection at the Pittsburg State University Library, Pittsburg, Kansas, which was unavailable to earlier researchers. Thus he is able to probe beyond the face value of socialist publications when dealing with Wayland's techniques and motives. Unlike previous scholars, he has placed *The Appeal to Reason* and its editor-publisher, Julius A. Wayland (and to a lesser degree Fred Warren), within the general context of the development of printing technology and the mass consumer culture of the Populist-Progressive era. Shore makes clear the paper's extent and appeal. Much more than a rural paper, it was once the central institution of the socialist movement. At its peak it had four hundred thousand subscribers and even appeared on the newsstands in the larger cities. Shore's significant book reestablishes the place of Wayland, Warren, and *The Appeal to Reason* as mainstream forces in the development of American socialism.

A Generation of Boomers: The Pattern of Railroad Labor Conflict in Nineteenth-Century America, by Shelton Stromquist. Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1987. xix, 353 pp. Illustrations, notes, bibliography, index. \$29.95 cloth.

REVIEWED BY JANICE L. REIFF, CASE WESTERN RESERVE UNIVERSITY

Shelton Stromquist, in *A Generation of Boomers*, challenges his readers to look at late nineteenth-century labor history from a variety of new perspectives. First, he asks his readers to shift their geographic focus from the larger urban areas of the East to the smaller urban areas of Iowa, a shift that he argues reflects the reality of railroad labor agitation. Next, he asks them to look specifically at the railroad workers who provided the impetus for the two largest worker protests in the nineteenth century, the Railroad Strike of 1877 and the Pullman Boycott of 1894. Even more challenging, he places both perspectives into a broad structural framework that considers the railroad industry, the communities in which the workers lived, the recruitment and persistence patterns of the railroad work force, and the life cycle of the workers themselves. From these perspectives, then, he offers new insights into the whole nature of labor protest in the last quarter of the nineteenth century.

Stromquist finds that the nature of railroad strikes changed in the years between 1877 and 1894. Through the late 1880s, strikes over wages predominated; after that, strikes were more likely to be over

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